An unusual early brood of the Willow Beauty *Peribatodes rhomboidaria* (D.& S.) (Lep.: Geometridae)?

A number (at least six or seven) of this familiar urban moth, which normally appears here only in late July and August, came to my m.v. lamp on 1 June 1999. The flight period given by all authors I have consulted is from late June at the earliest. But the 11th is nowhere near late in the month and the number present suggests that the species had already been out for some time, perhaps even from the beginning of June. In a really forward season this might be unremarkable, but I am not aware that 1999 has been so. One moth appeared on the night of 9 July and the species was present in at least normal numbers on that of 11 August.

The facts therefore rather suggest an extra brood interpolated into the life-cycle in advance of the normal one; yet that seems improbable to say the least. However, the alternative explanation of a single very protracted emergence hardly appears to fit them much better. Anyone who runs a moth trap throughout the summer would be in a better position to arrive at a sound judgement.– A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.

Flight time of the Scotch Argus *Erebia aethiops* (Esper) (Lep.: Nymphalidae) in Scotland

Although the Scotch Argus is one the most widespread species of butterfly occurring in Scotland, and in some areas the most numerous, it is surprisingly difficult to find information on its phenology. Most guides and handbooks suggest the very end of July to early September as the typical flight period, but this is at best anecdotal information.

Of 807 records for Scotch Argus in Scotland, up to 1982, held by the Biological Records Centre (BRC), at Monks Wood, only 47.1% were dated by month. Of these 380 records, 17.6% (67) were for July, 77.4% (294) for August and 4.2% (16) for September. The only set of comparable data that has been published comprises about 250 records for the period 1980-1996 for the Highland area (Stewart, J., Barbour, D. & Moran, S. 1998. *Highland Butterflies: a provisional atlas*). Although some records appear in both data sets, the number is probably relatively small. The monthly profiles are very similar, except that the proportion of August records is higher in the BRC data, which also contains a single record for May and two for June.

There are 229 fully dated records in the BRC data. These are shown divided into week classes (the same week classes used by ITE's Butterfly Monitoring Scheme to enable future comparison) in Figure 1. The total flight period extends over eight weeks, with all but four records falling in the period 22 July to 13 September (weeks 17 to 24) The distribution is skewed with a peak about the second week in August (week 19).